

REMARKS

Claims 3, 5-7, 10, 12-16, 20 and 21 are pending in this application. Applicants appreciate the Office Action's indication that claims 3 and 5 contain allowable subject matter.

By this Amendment, claims 1, 2, 4, 8, 9, 11 and 17-19 are canceled. Claims 3, 6, 7, 10 and 13-16 are amended. New claims 20 and 21 are added.

In particular, claim 3 is amended and rewritten in independent form. Claims 6 and 7 are amended to depend from claim 3. New claim 20 is added to recite the subject matter deleted from claim 3.

Similarly, claim 10 is amended and rewritten in independent form. Claims 13-16 are amended to depend from claim 10. New claim 21 is added to recite the subject matter deleted from claim 10.

Reconsideration of the application is respectfully requested. Especially, the non-elected claims 10 and 12-16 should be rejoined in view of the patentability of claim 3, and the above-outlined amendments made to claims 10 and 13-16.

Applicants respectfully submit that the above-outlined amendments and the cancellation of claims 1, 2, 4, 8, 9, 11 and 17-19 are made to obtain quick allowance of the subject matter indicated to be allowable in the Office Action, and not because of prior art. Applicants expressly reserve the right to further pursue the subject matter recited in claims 1, 2, 4, 8, 9, 11 and 17-19 in a continuation application.

Applicants respectfully request consideration of the references submitted with the May 7, 2003 and June 10, 2003 Information Disclosure Statements, and return of initialed Form PTO-1449 submitted with those Information Disclosure Statements. For the convenience of the Examiner, copies of the Form PTO-1449 are attached.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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Attachments:

Copies of Form PTO-1449 submitted with
May 7 and June 10, 2003 Information Disclosure Statements

Date: December 23, 2003

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